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( CIRCULAR No. 3. )

Surgeon General's Office,

WASHINGTON CITY, D. C., *January 30, 1863.*

I. In consequence of the great and improper latitude which many Surgeons have allowed themselves in the administration of the Hospital Fund, the following instructions are issued defining the articles for which and for which alone the hospital fund may be expended :

The hospital fund may be expended for the purchase of—

1st. Food, solid or fluid, to be used for the diet of the sick, and not furnished by the Commissary Department or Medical Department.

2d. Articles to be used in either the preparation or serving of the food, embracing principally cooking utensils and table furniture, and not furnished by the Quartermaster's Department or Medical Department.

3d. Gas, oil, and other means of illumination, to be bought instead of candles, which are part of the soldier's ration.

Experiment has been carefully and thoroughly made in a number of our best regulated hospitals, as to the capacity of the hospital fund to support a proper diet table for the sick.

Reports from these hospitals are unanimous in the testimony that the cost of supplying such a diet exceeds the value of the hospital ration, and hence all expenditures for objects of less importance than a liberal diet are acts of injustice to the sick soldier.

II. Upon the receipt of this circular, a return will be made to this Office, by Surgeons in charge of hospitals, of all articles of a nature not immediately perishable which have been purchased from the hospital fund, and which are now in use in the hospitals under their charge.

This return will be made in a form similar to the returns of hospital furniture now required, and will be made hereafter quarterly, upon the last day of March, June, September, and December.

Medical officers will be required to account strictly to this Department for all such articles as may be purchased from the hospital fund.

The accompanying circular, received from the Commissary General of Subsistence, is furnished for the information and guidance of Medical officers.

W. A. HAMMOND,

*Surgeon General.*

